

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



California Least Tern.

Protection Closer for Alameda Least Tern Colony

A recently released proposal for development at the former Alameda Naval Air Station (NAS) lays out a plan for permanent protection for the endangered California Least Terns that nest there while allowing for reasonable development on lands adjacent to the colony. The proposal revised an older plan to build a large medical and memorial complex on the runway at the former NAS, which is known locally as the Alameda Wildlife Refuge.

According to the proposal, the majority of the medical complex and columbarium will be constructed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on land adjacent to the refuge known as the Northwest Territories rather on the refuge. The vast majority of the runway would then be protected permanently for the benefit of the terns and other wildlife.

Several years ago, the VA and U.S. Navy released their original plan and met with strong opposition from Golden Gate Audubon and our allies because development on the refuge was likely to jeopardize the tern colony. The original plans violated a 1999 Biological Opinion that controlled development around the refuge and identified the refuge lands as essential for the conservation of the terns.

It appeared that an impasse had been reached and that, perhaps, litigation would

Eco-Ed Volunteers Gain While Giving

Imagine it's Friday morning at 9:30. You are standing in front of the observation tower at Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland or on the ridge along the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline or the upland area of the Pier 94 wetlands in San Francisco. As you scan the mudflats, you spot flocks of winter migrants—Dunlins, Black-bellied Plovers, and Western Sandpipers. You become fixated on their feeding behavior and flight patterns, momentarily lost in their sublime chorus.

Suddenly, you realize that their sounds have morphed into what seems to be the chatter of small humans. You turn around to see 35 nine-year-olds traveling toward you at various speeds and volumes. For most of them, it is the first, and possibly only, time they have studied outside the classroom all year. Liberated from their daily routine, they are thrilled to be on their Eco-Education Program field trip!

Your pulse quickens as you ponder your preparedness in dealing with these rambunctious (but adorable) creatures. Then a deep sense of peace and gratitude prevails as you recall that you are not alone in this endeavor. You think of the committed team of volunteers by your side, and you smile.

Each academic year, Golden Gate Audubon leads local third- through fifth-graders on a total of more than 50 weekday field trips to local wetland and riparian habitats. In a calendar year, that would average about once a week, but a

ECO-ED VOLUNTEERS continued on page 10



INSIDE

- 3 Birdathon Celebration
- 9 Summer Pelagic Trips
- 9 New Travel Offerings

LEAST TERN COLONY continued on page 12

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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For Nature Store hours, please call or check the website.

Design and layout by a community of...

Answering the Question

It was my very first meeting as Golden Gate Audubon executive director, three years ago. The president of a large charitable foundation glared across the conference table and challenged me with The Question: "With hundreds of environmental groups in the Bay Area, what makes Golden Gate Audubon so special?"

This year, on the Saturday before the Super Bowl, more than 20 GGAS board members and staff packed into the Richardson Bay Audubon Center in Tiburon to spend a day answering that same question.

GGAS is currently developing a three-year strategic plan, with the assistance of the Stanford Graduate School of Business Alumni Consulting Team. Our goal is to create a road map that will guide our programs and inspire people to invest their time and resources in Golden Gate Audubon.

Our first step that Saturday was to describe our vision for the future. After much spirited debate, we agreed on "creating North America's most bird-friendly urban community." Here's what we mean.

Bird-friendly—because birds are the unifying passion for our members. Bird species are the wildlife we know and love best. They are the path through which we educate others about the importance of environmental protection. While we understand the urgency of protecting all wildlife and ecosystems, Golden Gate Audubon is unique within the conservation world because of our focus on birds and their habitats.

Urban—because the challenges we face protecting birds in the Bay Area are different from, say, Yosemite Valley or the Klamath Basin. Our dwindling wildlife habitats compete with many other uses and are under constant pressure for development. So our conservation campaigns must address the challenges facing birds in densely populated areas, such as habitat loss, building collisions, feral cats, and unleashed dogs.

Community—because we are people, and we are not alone. San Francisco will not be "bird-friendly" unless we are effective in convincing our diverse communities that there is a connection between their welfare and the welfare of birds. We aspire to a Bay Area filled with people who are not just passively tolerating birds, but reaching out to welcome them with understanding and wonder.

With this vision in mind, we then outlined GGAS's mission—our reason to exist:

The Golden Gate Audubon Society engages people to

- Experience the wonder of birds, and translate that wonder into action, and
- Protect native bird populations and their habitats.

To me, this mission truly expresses what is special about Golden Gate Audubon.

So what happens now? Please join us in the next steps of planning for our future. Come to our Annual Membership Meeting (details below). I will give a brief update on our strategic plan, and I invite you to attend and share your ideas. You might prepare by answering The Question for yourself: What makes Golden Gate Audubon so special to me?

Mark Welther

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Annual Membership Meeting and Board Election

GGAS will hold the Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, June 21, at 6:30 p.m., immediately prior to the Speakers Series presentation in Berkeley at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (see page 5).

We ask members to vote in the 2012 GGAS board of directors election, which will take place at the June annual meeting, the May Speaker series, and the Birdathon dinner, and online. See page 11 for details.

Don't Miss the Birdathon Celebration Dinner

Now is the time to make your reservation for the 2012 Golden Gate Audubon Birdathon Celebration Dinner on Thursday, May 10. We expect the event to sell out, so please make your plans today to join the fun!

The program will feature San Francisco *Chronicle* columnist and two-time National Outdoor Writer of the Year Tom Stienstra, who will regale us with stories of birds and the California outdoors. GGAS member and wine expert George Peyton will pour Rock Wall Wines to complement the fabulous food provided by Red Door Caterers of Emeryville.

Be sure to come ready to bid on the silent auction items, including the art of Aimée Baldwin, as well as the original artwork of Hans Peeters featured in the new *Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas*.

Awards will be given to winners of the 2012 Elsie Roemer Conservation Award and Paul Covel Education Award. Our second annual Miles T. McKey Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to a deserving high school intern. The evening will culminate with Birdathon awards and prizes for most species counted, best bird, top fundraiser, and other categories.

This festive event will be held at the Brazil Building in Berkeley's Tilden Regional Park. We start at 6 p.m. with birding on the terrace. Dinner is at 7 p.m. Tickets are only \$35 per person, and all proceeds benefit our conservation and education programs.

Please note: If you are competing for a Birdathon award, all forms must be in our office by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 4.

Aimée Baldwin's Birds at the Birdathon Dinner

At the dinner, check out the exhibit of amazing bird sculptures by Aimée Baldwin. Her works will be available in a silent auction as a fundraiser. Her sculptures, exquisitely crafted from hand-cut crepe paper and papier-mâché, range from wading birds to songbirds. The only prefabricated parts are the birds' glass eyes. No molds are used, so no two birds are ever the same. For a peek at her work, see www.vegan-taxidermy.com. The exhibit is free (without attending the dinner), but please RSVP to Lisa Owens Viani at lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.7295.

Special Fund Supports Young Environmental Leaders

In honor of their son, Miles T. McKey, who passed away in 2004, longtime Golden Gate Audubon supporters Miles and Mel McKey have established a memorial fund to get young people out in nature and to help create a new generation of environmental leaders.

The younger Miles was an enthusiastic hiker, backpacker, and bicyclist, and an advocate for social justice. His love for the outdoors may have been genetic: his great-grandfather was an early leader of the Sierra Club, and his parents are passionate birders. The younger Miles was a strong believer in the value of dispute resolution and worked as a volunteer mediator for the city of Berkeley. And he enjoyed working with young people as a volunteer for the youth group at his church.

To honor Miles's love of the outdoors, his work with youth, and his interest in social justice, our Miles T. McKey Young Environmental Leaders Program supports our high school interns from underserved schools in East Oakland and Richmond. The interns engage in enrichment activities

that help them develop leadership skills and acquire the training needed to teach scientific concepts to younger students as well as to mentor them. Interns also gain leadership skills on wilderness camping events and are given learning opportunities such as presenting at the statewide Audubon California conference. The program awards some interns a small college scholarship.

Our interns from Oakland High say that teaching younger students may be the most rewarding part of the program. Says Steven Sae-fong, "This program gave me a lot of experience in teaching and guiding kids about important estuaries, animal habitats, and restoration. It's important for us to teach the younger kids so they can keep passing it on from generation to generation." Chan Saelee concurs: "My internship has inspired me to be more environmentally aware and fight for the right to have a healthy environment. It taught me actions that do something good for the Earth and that are also enjoyable. I feel a sense of pride to be able to pass on the knowledge of our environment to elementary school students."

The Miles T. McKey Young Environmental Leaders Fund has supported six interns to date, but we want to build the program to support more interns, more field trips, and more classes in which our interns help mentor elementary school students. Please consider supporting this important fund—and the next generation of environmental leaders. Contact Development Director Lisa Owens Viani, 510.843.7295, lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org.



Intern Ezekiel Perez helps band a White-crowned Sparrow

Mariela Ortega Walsh



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD WEEK

Golden Gate Audubon is partnering with the California Academy of Science (CAS) and the San Francisco Planning Department to celebrate the week, May 7–13, by focusing on birds that migrate to and through San Francisco. The activities, held at the CAS, include birding from the academy roof and on a walk to Stow Lake, a bird illustration class, and bird games. The Chat with a Scientist program will feature Allen Fish, director of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, and Marie Strassburger, regional migratory bird chief with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Information on the Standards for Bird Safe Buildings will be available. For a schedule, visit the Golden Gate Audubon website.

IMPROVE BIRD HABITAT AT GGAS SITES

Lend a hand at our habitat restoration sites. For details and directions, please go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

- Pier 94, San Francisco: May 5 and June 2, 9 a.m. – noon.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: May 19 and June 16, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Golden Gate Park near the Bison Paddock, San Francisco: May 19 and June 16, 9 a.m. – noon, with SF Rec. & Parks.
- Lands End in the Presidio, San Francisco: June 9, 1 – 4 p.m., with the Parks Conservancy.

DOCENT PROGRAM AT OAKLAND'S LAKE MERRITT

Make time in your spring birding schedule to visit the docents at Lake Merritt on May 12 or 26 or June 9, 9 a.m. until noon. Stationed near the Rotary Nature Center and bird sanctuary, the docents have scopes for sharing close-up looks at birds such as the nesting Double-crested Cormorants. The docent program is a project of GGAS and San Francisco Nature Education.

AMERICA'S CUP UPDATE

The 34th annual America's Cup is sailing forward, though as a smaller event than originally planned. Event organizers have revised their expectations for participants and spectators. Overall, a smaller event likely means fewer environmental impacts, which is good for local birds and other wildlife.

Event organizers have stated that only four of ten invited teams will compete and the number of spectator boats will be approximately 800, one-third of initial estimates. Revised project plans also state that spectator activities will not occur at Crissy Field, which means fewer potential impacts for the Western Snowy Plovers at the Wildlife Protection Area there.

Golden Gate Audubon remains in active discussions with the city of San Francisco and the National Park Service to reduce impacts arising from the event. We have emphasized scientific monitoring of wildlife before and after the race events, adequate mitigation for impacts, and improved education and outreach for race participants and spectators.

Our members have played a crucial role in attending public hearings and providing

comments to help prioritize the protection of wildlife during the event. We strongly encourage you to stay informed and involved to help the America's Cup minimize impacts to birds on the bay.

A BIG THANK-YOU

We thank Recology and the Port of San Francisco for supporting Golden Gate Audubon's regular volunteer habitat events at Pier 94 in San Francisco. Each month, volunteers improve the local wetland by removing weeds, recyclables, and trash from the site. Then Recology picks up the weeds for compost, the cans and bottles for recycling, and the trash for delivery to a landfill. We thank the Port of San Francisco for generously allowing us to use Pier 94 for our programs.

RETURN OF THE TERNS

The popular annual tour of the colony of nesting California Least Terns at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge will be held on Saturday, June 16. Registration is required, and spaces on the buses leaving from Crab Cove Visitor Center in Alameda fill early. For details on the tour schedule and fees, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Summer Day Camp for Wildlife Discoverers July 9 – 13, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Golden Gate Audubon's award-winning Eco-Education Program invites nature lovers ages 7–12 to join us for a fun-filled week of exploring wildlife and their habitats.

The Discoverers will learn how to identify local birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, and plants in various habitats; collect and study aquatic organisms; and plant natives to help endangered animals. They will also engage in other enjoyable activities such as building animal kites and puppets, playing games, and singing songs.

All these activities will allow the Discoverers to explore beautiful East Bay parks, including MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline and Lake Merritt in Oakland, Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, and Wildcat Canyon Regional Park in El Cerrito/Richmond. Our camp leaders are highly trained educators and naturalists with a commitment to professionalism and a passion to teach nature education!

Fee for the week is \$225. Space is limited to 15 participants. Parents are responsible for drop-off and pick-up at the daily sites. Extended hours are available. For information or to register your child, contact ggaseducation@gmail.com or 510.508.1388, or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/news/sign-up-now-for-ggas-summer-camp.



SPEAKER SERIES

Restoring Vital Bird Habitat in Carman Valley

Jim Steele

San Francisco: Thursday, May 17—7 p.m.
refreshments, 7:30 program
(free for GGAS members)

For 25 years, Jim Steele monitored birds in the Tahoe National Forest around Yuba Pass, Sierra Valley, and Perrazzo Meadows. He was also the principal researcher in an intensive study of six wet meadows on the east and west slopes of the Sierra Nevada crest, funded by the U.S. Forest Service. This riparian habitat is critical for breeding birds and for birds during molt and migration. The research culminated in the restoration of the Carman Valley watershed just west of Sierra Valley. Jim will describe the restoration and the importance of a healthy watershed for birdlife. Bird banding provided an opportunity to observe the progression of individuals from juvenal to adult plumage. Photos of birds in the hand will let you test your identification skills of the juvenal plumages of common birds.

Jim Steele, director of the Sierra Nevada Field Campus from 1985 to 2009, co-authored the Checklist of Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley. During that time, he monitored birds of the Sierra Nevada on the Tahoe National Forest via point counts and participated in an 18-year bird-banding study. He has taught classes on bird banding and teaches a class on birdsong identification at the Sierra Nevada Field Campus.

San Francisco Speaker Series: First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html, and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.



Carman Valley, after restoration

Magical Madagascar

Bob Lewis

Berkeley: Thursday, June 21—7 p.m.
refreshments, 7:30 program
(free for GGAS members)

Ninety million years ago, Madagascar broke away from the last fragments of Gondwana, the great southern continent. Since then, life on Madagascar has evolved in a unique way, isolated from Africa by the Mozambique Channel. Five or six families of birds are found only on this fourth-largest island in the world, as are more than half of the world's chameleons. Lemurs are found nowhere else. Bob will consider the evolutionary concepts of endemism and adaptive radiation on this island laboratory. He will illustrate Madagascar life with striking images taken on a recent trip: Cuckoo-Rollers, Asities, Mesites, Vangas, and other Malagasy birds, and some of the many species of lemurs.

Bob is a GGAS board member and an award-winning nature photographer who has traveled to many countries in search of avian subjects. He has taught birding classes in the Bay Area for almost 20 years and is a frequent speaker at libraries, conservation groups, photo clubs, and benevolent societies on bird-related subjects. Bob has seen about 4,000 of the world's 10,000 species of birds and enjoys photographing members of the world's bird families.

Berkeley Speaker Series: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin)

Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.html



Malagasy Kingfisher.

Your Invitation to the Volunteer Picnic

Golden Gate Audubon invites you, our dedicated volunteers, to our annual volunteer appreciation event. This year's thank-you party will be held Saturday, June 23, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at Lake Merritt in Oakland, near the lake's Nature Center. We invite volunteers and their guests from all around the bay to join us for delicious food, congenial company, viewing the birds at the lake, and other activities. Lake Merritt is accessible on BART and by AC Transit, and the site also has bicycle racks.

To reduce our environmental footprint, we are not mailing paper invitations. However, we will send e-mail invitations. If you think we may not have your correct e-mail address, let us know. Please RSVP to the volunteer event by June 8 so we can provide directions to the specific spot at the lake where we will gather. Also, tell us if you have any food allergies. Contact Noreen Weeden, nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.301.0570. We look forward to seeing you on June 23!

Observations Online

Bruce Mast's column covering notable bird sightings for February and March can be found on the Golden Gate Audubon website under Birding Resources.

Are You Buying a Car?

If you are getting new wheels and wondering what to do with your old ones, we have a solution. You can donate your vehicle, whether or not it is operable, to support Golden Gate Audubon and at the same time get a tax benefit. The service is free, and you'll receive a big thank-you from us! To find out more, call 877.999.8322.



Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Saturday, May 5, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Malcolm Sproul, 925.376.8945

Meet by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. in El Cerrito, next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Day Rd. We'll drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd., then walk a hilly transect of the canyon to bird the brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian areas, and grasslands. This 5-mile is being led by Malcolm for the 31st year! Bring lunch and liquids.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, May 6, June 3, 8 – 10:30 a.m.
Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com; Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241 (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds.

The garden charges \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring identification for residency and membership status.

Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve

Saturday, May 12, 8 a.m. – noon
Tim Howe, timgh88@yahoo.com, 510.435.6654

Meet in the preserve parking lot, 6800 Skyline Blvd. We'll hike on fire roads, which are easy walking. Birds we may encounter include Lazuli Bunting, California Thrasher, Lark Sparrow, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. The leader will bring a scope. Water and bathrooms available.

Garin Regional Park

Hayward, Alameda County

Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13, 8 – 11:30 a.m.
Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Garin hosts many very accessible birds in spring. We should find nests of at least five

species and witness breeding behavior in several more. Among the highlights are orioles, wrens, bluebirds, and warblers. Habitats include riparian, grassy lawn and hillside, freshwater pond, and tall eucalyptus trees often hosting raptors. Heavy rain cancels. Meet in first parking lot to your left after the kiosk at the end of Garin Ave. off Mission Blvd. The park may be collecting fees (\$5). \$

Corona Heights

Fridays, May 18, June 15, 8 – 10 a.m.
Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Aquatic Park and Waterfront

San Francisco

Saturdays, May 19, June 16, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Carol Kiser, carol_kiser@nps.gov, 415.447.5000

On this walk for children and beginners, and all others, we will look for resident and migrating birds. Meet at the entrance to the Hyde Street Pier at Hyde and Jefferson on the western border of Fisherman's Wharf. Nearby parking is at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (free for 4 hours), Ghirardelli Square, and the Anchorage.

🚲 Hayward Shoreline

Alameda County

Saturday, May 19
Michelle Labbe, 413.687.1179, labbemichelle@gmail.com; Jeremy Andersen

Meet at 8 a.m. at the San Leandro BART station following 7:56 a.m. arrival of train from MacArthur. We'll ride 2.5 miles to the trailhead via Williams St. (bike lanes).

Carpooling and Other Field Trip Resources

If you are going on a field trip, would you welcome company? Do you have room in your car to take other birders? To help find a ride or offer a ride, sign up with GGA's carpool group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. When you sign up, you answer a few simple questions, then receive a confirming e-mail. Once you are a member, you post messages under "Need Ride" or "Offer Ride," along with the destination and date. The more birders who sign up, the more useful the group will be. Birders are encouraged to help the driver with expenses by contributing to the cost of fuel and bridge tolls.

- East Bay Regional District: www.ebparks.org/parks
- SF Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>
- Bay Area transit: www.transit.511.org
- California state parks: www.parks.ca.gov
- National parks: www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm
- National wildlife refuges: www.fws.gov/refuges

Or meet at 8:25 a.m. at end of Monarch Bay Dr. adjacent to trailhead. This trip lasts into the afternoon. We will go south on the SF Bay Trail from the San Leandro Marina to the Hayward Shoreline Regional Park and the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, making about a 20 mile round-trip. Nesting avocets, stilts, and swallows may be seen. Some parts of the trails are paved; others are easily negotiable. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Transit: From BART, ride south about 1 block to Williams St. and turn right. Go about 3 miles to end and turn left, continuing onto Monarch Bay Dr. and going to end. **Car:** From I-880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit (west) and in 1.4 miles turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to the end to the last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park.

Point Reyes National Seashore

Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m.

Martha Wessitsh, 415.681.8059,
415.533.4470 (cell), martha@wessitsh.com

This is a great time of year for migrants at Point Reyes, particularly around the lighthouse and the Fish Docks. We will meet at Drakes Beach, bird around there for a while, and then caravan/carpool to other good areas nearby, including the alphabetized ranches, and the lighthouse and Fish Docks. Weather conditions, such as heavy wind, may change our destinations. Trip will end around 2 or 3 p.m. Bring a lunch and liquids and dress in layers. Restrooms available.

Mitchell Canyon

Sunday, May 20, 9 a.m. – noon

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hot-rock@
sbcglobal.net, 925.785.0130 (cell)

This beautiful riparian area on the north flank of Mount Diablo should be very birdy this time of year, with many residents and migrants in attendance. We'll walk out a couple of miles on the flat part of the road and return the same way. Hardier souls can continue up the steeper portion looking for California Thrasher and other scrub species. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Mitchell Can-

yon Rd. outside Clayton. For directions, search for "Mitchell Canyon Rd., Clayton," on Google maps, or contact the leaders. Water and restrooms available.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Wednesdays, May 23, June 27,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com, Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@gmail.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the gar-

den path toward Children's Fairyland, or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will meet where we missed. The winter visitors will mostly have moved on, but there will still be a few of them. Bring party clothes. Any of the parties will be especially fine. The summer birds are still in abundance, and some early ducks and geese might be wandering about. Take the stairs up to the top of the hill and walk into the park in front of the playground. The beach area behind the playground is a very good place near Children's Fairyland. If the beach is occupied when you arrive, start the trip at the bus and boat ticket and parking lot in the lot where you can see the house and garage.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 7

New Friday Trips at Tilden and Wildcat Canyon

Alan Kaplan is continuing to lead first Friday field trips at Tilden Regional Park and will now lead second Friday trips in May and June. Note that the May 4 trip has two parts, and the second June Friday trip goes to Wildcat Canyon. For additional information, contact Alan at 510.526.7609 (messages) or LNKPLN@earthlink.net.

Friday, May 4, 5:30 – 7:30 a.m.

The dawn chorus is our theme for this early-bird trip. Meet at the (defunct) Pony Ride Parking Lot at the foot of Canon Dr. (turn right, look for the stone restroom). We'll walk around to the Blue Gum Gate entrance to Tilden Nature Area and along the Loop Rd. Western Wood-Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and other returnees are likely songsters.

Friday, May 4, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Birdsongs and how they are sung: Brain and Syntax is the theme for this walk at our regular time. Meet at the Tilden Nature Area parking lot. Walk may include some hills (switchbacks, gentle rise) on the Packrat Trail to Jewel Lake. Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, and other stars of the bird opera stage are likely to perform. Restrooms and water available.

Friday, May 11, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the Inspiration Point parking lot, off Wildcat Canyon Rd. We'll walk up the Seaview Trail (moderate climb, somewhat rocky in places) for birds, wildflowers, and bay views. Restrooms at start of the walk. Bring water.

Friday, June 1, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Birdsongs—how they are learned (by birds and by birders)—will be our theme. More Swainson's Thrushes than you can shake a stick at! Wilson's Warbler capital of the world! Meet at the Tilden Nature Area parking lot. Walk may include some hills (switchbacks, gentle rise) on the Packrat Trail or Loop Road. Restrooms and water available.

Friday, June 8, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the end of Rifle Range Rd. off Arlington Blvd. in Richmond, El Cerrito. We'll walk into Wildcat Canyon Regional Park and down to the creek (moderate down and up, rocky in places). Warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and the other "usual suspects" and "summer complaints." No restrooms or water available.

UC Botanical Garden

Wednesday, June 6, 9:15 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

Join Phila Rogers and Chris Carmichael, associate director of the garden, for a Garden Sit. Breeding birds should still be singing, and the garden will be in full floristic glory. We will sit and listen in several different habitats for two hours. Highlights may be Hooded Orioles, Pacific Wrens, and California Thrashers. Admission fee is \$10, \$8 for seniors, free for garden members. Parking (for a fee) is available at the UC Berkeley lot directly across Centennial Dr. from the garden. The sit is limited to 20. Contact Phila to sign up. Participants are welcome to bring lunch to eat at one of the garden's picnic tables. \$

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Friday – Sunday, June 22 – 24

Dan and Joan Murphy, murphsf@comcast.net (e-mailed preferred),
415.564.0074

Join us on our annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and many of the flycatchers, warblers, and finches that breed in the mountains. Please contact us by e-mail or phone if you are planning to attend. We may have to limit attendance if the group is larger than in past years.

New Class, New Location

Eddie Bartley and Bob Lewis are teaching a new GGAS class, Romance Is in the Air, focusing on bird courtship, nesting, raising young, and related subjects. The four Wednesday evening lectures, 7:15–8:45 p.m., May 2–23, will be held at the Albany Community Center, 1249 Marin Avenue. A three-hour field trip will be scheduled for the Saturday or Sunday following each lecture. Fee: \$80. To register, call 510.843.2222.

Summer Classes in the Sierra

Spaces may still be available in the two sessions of Birds of the Sierra, June 7–10 and June 14–17, held in the Yuba Pass area, an ideal place to see Sierra birds in June. For details, go to Classes at www.goldengateaudubon.org. To register, call 510.843.2222.

Birders arriving early, on Thursday night, June 21, can meet us at 7 p.m. to watch the goings-on at the abandoned beaver pond at Hat Lake (about 12 miles south of Manzanita Lake). Park in the lot to the left just beyond the hairpin turn at Hat Lake. Please don't slam car doors or make excessive noise. We'll leave early enough to watch the Common Nighthawks over Manzanita Lake.

On Friday and Sunday, we'll meet at the Manzanita Lake Campground store at 6:30 a.m. and bird around the lake for 2–3 hours, return to camp for breakfast, then rendezvous again at the store at 10:30 a.m. On Friday, we'll take a leisurely hike of 3–5 miles on one of Lassen's beautiful trails, climbing as much as 700 feet. On Sunday, we'll drive through the park (if the road is open), making frequent stops for birding. We usually head for home or camp after lunch at Summit Lake Campground. On Saturday, campers will meet by the store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley, and Baum Lake. Those staying elsewhere can meet us around 8 a.m. at the Vista Point about 12 miles north of Lassen on Hwys. 44 and 89. Since this is a long day, we suggest having dinner at a local restaurant or a picnic dinner.

Camping facilities at Manzanita Lake Campground are by reservation on loops A and C and on a first-come, first-served basis on loops B and D. Reserve at www.recreation.gov or 877.444.6777. Lodging is available about 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (530.335.7121). For other information,

contact park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Contact us prior to the trip to find out our campsite number. Wear sturdy shoes for hiking and bring lunch and liquids for each day of the trip. For carpooling information, see the box on page 7. \$

Quarry Lakes, Alameda Creek, and Coyote Hills

Fremont, Alameda County

Saturday, June 23

Michelle Labbe, 413.687.1179,
labbemichelle@gmail.com;
Jeremy Andersen

Meet at 8:20 a.m. on the east side of the Fremont BART Station in the parking lot. We'll return to BART about 3 p.m. We'll see birds from the time we step off the train, and we'll ride through a variety of habitats: riparian, marsh, and bayside. Total distance is about 24 miles mostly on paved bike trails, with almost no uphill. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids for a picnic at Coyote Hills Visitors Center. Dress for variable weather. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Transit: The Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 7:35 a.m. **Car:** Take I-880 to Fremont, then the Mowry Avenue exit east toward Central Fremont and go 2.3 miles on Mowry Ave. The BART parking lot is on the east side of the station past Civic Center Dr.

Mono Lake and the Eastern Sierra

Friday – Sunday, June 29 – July 1

Emilie Strauss; Rusty Scalf,
rscalf@sonic.net, 510.666.9936

Enjoy the wonders of Mono Lake and the birds of the pines and sagebrush on our annual trip to the Mono Basin. On Friday and Saturday, we'll visit the shores of Mono Lake and hike Lundy Canyon. On Sunday, we'll extemporize based upon snow levels and local reports. Possibilities include subalpine hiking or birding the Great Basin habitats of the Sierran rain shadow. Participants on this trip must be strong hikers. The trip starts on Friday at 8 a.m. at Mono Lake County Park, about 4 miles north of Lee Vining on Hwy. 395. Trip is limited to 15. Contact Rusty to sign up. \$

Half Moon Bay Pelagic Trips

1000-1000

1000-1000

**Saturday, July 28; Sundays, July 29,
August 12, and September 9;**

Mondays, August 27, September 10

Cook's Petrel is a top target on this trip, and this is the prime time of year to find petrels. The July 31, 2010, Half Moon Bay trip enjoyed petrels in both San Mateo and San Francisco counties. Cost: \$146 per person for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is free. Send payment along with the full name, address, phone, cell phone, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024.

Monterey Bay Pelagic Trips

**Fridays, August 3, 10, and 17; Friday,
September 7; Tuesday, September 11;
Wednesday, September 12; Thursday,
September 13**

Trips out of Monterey Bay are classic summertime trips for albatrosses and shearwaters, whales and dolphins. Cost: \$104 per person for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is \$7. Send payment along with the full name, address, phone, cell phone, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024.

Farallon Islands Pelagic Trip

Sunday, August 5

At the largest seabird colony on the West Coast south of Alaska, we'll see seabirds at their peak of breeding. The specialty of this trip is the colorful Tufted Puffin. Shearwater Journeys has a 100 percent success rate in finding these seabirds. Brown Booby was a highlight on the 2011 trip. Cost: \$139 per person for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is free. Send payment along with the full name, address, phone, cell phone, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024.

Travel with Golden Gate Audubon

Two new exciting trips—one to New Mexico, the other to Oregon—have been added to our travel program schedule.

From Friday evening, June 15, to Sunday morning, June 17, Harry Eider will lead a trip to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, a hot spot with direct nesting species such as Sandhill Crane, Wilson's Phalarope, Swainson's Hawk, and Sage Grouse. The refuge will also seek out Sage Thrasher, Sage Sparrow, and Short-eared Owl, as well as eastern species. Lodging will be at the Malheur Field Station in the heart of the refuge. Cost per person will depend on the number of participants but is estimated to be \$325–350 including lodging, meals, and a \$50 donation to GGAS.

Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours is the guide for two trips to northern New Mexico, August 13–17 and 20–24. This area of the state, on the spine of the Continental Divide, has an astonishing variety of habitats that host species found both west and east of the Divide. As a bonus, fall migration for Great Basin land birds and raptors begins in August. Cost per person is \$625, which includes a \$50 donation to GGAS and covers ground transportation, guide services, and park entry fees. Not included are airfare, lodging, and meals. Each trip is limited to four.

Spaces are still available on the June 8–12 and 21–25 trips to Nome, led by Rich Cimino. At this time of the year, most of the birds are in their resplendent breeding plumages. Each tour will cover prime birding areas and look for regularly occurring accidental Asian species. Cost per person is \$2,400, which includes a \$150 donation to GGAS and covers lodging, ground transportation, airport transfers, and guide services. Not included are airfare and meals. Each trip is limited to four.

To register for these trips or obtain further information and detailed itineraries, contact Chris Bard at chrisbard@earthlink.net.

New Travel with GGAS Coordinator

Pat Kirkpatrick is excited about becoming the new coordinator. Pat has worked in the nonprofit world for her entire career, most recently as the development director for Disability Rights Advocates in Berkeley, where she now serves on the board. Pat's love of travel began when she was an exchange student in Turkey. She has taught English in Turkey and also in Hungary, Taiwan, and Malaysia. She became interested in birds when she monitored nesting seabirds on the Sonoma coast and later took the Cornell Lab bird biology course through GGAS. Pat is eager to discover new destinations for our program and to repeat popular past trips. She welcomes ideas for future trips. Contact Pat at 510.527.5321 or patkirkpatrick14@gmail.com.

We thank Chris Bard for all of her energy, enthusiasm, and organizational skills over the past two years volunteering as the travel coordinator. The travel program has grown thanks to her dedication and that of her husband, Gary.

New GGAS Office Manager

Hearing an unfamiliar voice on the phone when you call our office? That voice belongs to John Trubina, our new office manager. John brings great organizational skills and a professional background in technology, as well as deep connections with local Episcopal and social justice communities. John graduated from the Episcopal School for Deacons and was ordained as a deacon in June 2011. He serves as a volunteer chaplain at a San Leandro hospital and is founder of Sacred Space—Oakland and Sacred Space—Hayward, which serve the homeless. He has worked on the CROP Hunger Walks in both Oakland and Walnut Creek. John looks forward to connecting the worlds of birding and faith-based organizing. In his first three weeks at GGAS, he signed up 11 new members!

typical school year is nine months. Subtract the one-month window of mandatory state testing, and the total number of rainy days, and we are sometimes forced to organize five field trips per week! Such a demanding schedule would be impossible without the assistance of our dedicated Eco-Education Program volunteers.

Who are they, you ask? Who would be so committed as to donate their time and energy to urban youth so thrilled to discover local wildlife that they shriek from the feeling of shorecrabs in their hands or scream in a frenzy at the first deer they've ever seen? What intrepid individuals would lead our future environmental stewards in planting wetland natives in former landfill sites, removing bagfuls of invasive iceplant along the muddy and odorous bayshore, or traversing woodland habitats for a glimpse of avian splendor?

We are extremely grateful for the assistance that each Eco-Education volunteer has given over the years to provide our students with a deep connection to the natural world around them. Please join us in commending the following volunteers who have donated countless hours, exercised a profound sense of patience, and cultivated

an inspiring level of compassion: Juan Benjumea, Michael Chinn, James Edmonds, Mary Filippini, David Jaber, Jenny Jacobs, Lorelee Larios, Alexis Levine, Herb and Randi Long, Lakisha Mitchell, Abbey Myszka, Audre Newman, Rosemary Nocera, Hilary Powers, Brad Rose, Sara Segal, Jessica Sund, Evgeniy Tarakanovskiy, Constance Taylor, Anh-thu Elaine Vo, Jeffry Wilkinson, and Sofia Wong.

We asked our Eco-Stars about their commitment. "I volunteer because it gives me the opportunity to enjoy two of my favorite things—children and nature," Mary Filippini said. "The kids are so curious and excited about the wonderful natural habitats they are introduced to here in the Bay Area. Their enthusiasm is contagious!" Hilary Powers exclaimed, "It's fun! I'll never forget when one of the girls spotted a Hooded Oriole out in the open that I'd entirely missed!"

Herb and Randi Long noted: "We benefit so much from the amazing field trips offered by GGAS. So volunteering with Eco-Education is a way to 'pay back' what we gain from those who volunteer as field trip leaders. And we believe that it is so important to expose young people to the outdoors. If at the end of the day, we make a significant impact on only one student

who encourages his or her family to explore more of the wonders of nature, the time volunteering has been well worth it." For Herb, one of the most memorable moments was "seeing the kids look through a scope at a Western Bluebird and then say 'WOW!'"

As we have expanded the Eco-Education Program from Oakland, to Richmond, and now to southeast San Francisco, the need for volunteers is greater than ever. The equation is simple: the more volunteers who can join our field trips, the more enriching the experience becomes for our students.

Expertise in a particular field is not required. Everyone has a unique perspective on the natural world to share. If a child asks a question to which you may not know the answer, you can simply say, "I don't know but that's a great question. Let's learn about it together!" Your actions and words may instill a newly discovered appreciation for the natural world in a child who has never been to the bay or to a creek, never looked through a pair of binoculars or a microscope.

All that is required is a childlike sense of wonder, a will to share your joy, and a strong belief that environmental education will lead to a healthy future for our planet.

—Anthony DeCicco, Education Director

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from January 1, 2012, to March 16, 2012.

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Ballot for Election of Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors

Ballots received by the June 30, 2012, ballot election deadline will be counted in accordance with the rules provided for each candidate. Please vote for up to three candidates.

DIRECTOR NOMINEE	TERM ENDING	YES	NO
David Anderson	2015		
Whitney Dotson	2015		
Diane Ross-Leach	2015		

SIGNATURE: _____

Yes, I would like to begin receiving the *Gull* online. Please send me an e-mail notice when the *Gull* is posted on the GGAS website. My e-mail address is _____



GGAS Board Election—Don't Forget to Vote!

The 2012 election for Golden Gate Audubon members to select directors of the GGAS board of directors will take place by written ballot, available above and also at the May 17 Speakers Series in San Francisco and the June 21 annual meeting and Speakers Series in Berkeley (see page 5) and at the May 10 Birdathon Celebration Dinner (see page 3). Members can also vote online at www.goldengateaudubon.org. The board's Development Committee, with the approval of the board, has nominated the three candidates listed above. A total of 35 ballots is needed to meet the quorum requirement of the GGAS bylaws.

Members in good standing can complete and sign the ballot form and mail it to the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702, or fax it to 510.843.5351. Deadline for voting is June 30, 2012.

DAVID ANDERSON

Named a designated director in 2011, David Anderson was director of the San Francisco Zoo for 14 years, leading its transformation into an institution with a strong focus on conservation activities. From 2004 to 2009, David was executive director of Audubon of Florida. An avid birder for 30 years, David has a life list of species from all seven continents. He is chair of the GGAS San

Francisco Conservation Committee and is on the Nominating, Development, and Strategic Planning Committees.

WHITNEY DOTSON

A designated and then elected GGAS board member since 2008, Whitney Dotson is a director of the East Bay Regional Parks District representing communities that include Berkeley, Albany, Richmond, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, and part of Oakland. Whitney is a longtime Richmond community activist and former associate director of the Neighborhood House of North Richmond, a nonprofit service agency. He serves as vice chair of the Community Advisory Group monitoring the cleanup of Campus Bay and

the UC Berkeley Richmond Field Station. He currently sits on the GGAS Conservation and Education Committees.

DIANE ROSS LEECH

As PG&E's director of environmental policy, Diane Ross-Leech created PG&E's Environmental Stewardship Program, which is responsible for developing multi-species habitat conservation plans, migratory bird protection plans, and land conservation projects. Diane chairs the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture management board and serves on the San Francisco Bay Trail board. She joined the GGAS board as a designated member in 2007 and has been an elected board member and president since 2009.

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LEAST TERN COLONY from page 1

be required to challenge the Navy and VA plan. Yet, after months of negotiations between the Navy, VA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), city of Alameda, and East Bay Regional Park District, the new compromise proposal was presented. Under this new plan, the Navy will transfer the Northwest Territories to the city of Alameda, which will provide a long-term lease to the VA for its development. The VA will take possession of the refuge lands and coordinate with the USFWS and the park district to manage the property, provide for reasonable public access, and protect and monitor the tern colony.

The new proposal also included plans for a 140-acre regional park to be developed by the East Bay Regional Park District on the Northwest Territories adjacent to the VA complex. Unfortunately, negotiations between the district and the city reached an impasse. Rather than stall the whole project, the district withdrew its plans for the regional park, but committed to participating in the management of the refuge. It is

hoped that the city and park district will be able to reach an agreement and that the regional park will be added to the Northwest Territories in the future.

The revised project is a significant step forward in the protection of the California Least Terns at Alameda. The terns have nested on the runway since the 1970s. When the base was closed in 1994, Golden Gate Audubon worked with the USFWS and proposed the creation of a national wildlife refuge at the site. When talks between the USFWS and the Navy broke down in 2002, the Navy approached the VA, and the original proposal to develop the refuge was created.

Since 2002, the Alameda colony has become one of the most important California Least Tern breeding sites in the world. It has consistently produced more fledglings than other colonies four or five times its size in Southern California because the unique features of the runway and lack of human disturbance make the site more manageable. The Alameda colony is the anchor for the Northern California population of Califor-

nia Least Terns and has been seeding other, small colonies in the Bay Area. It is also expected to become even more important as climate change forces the species to shift its range northward over the next century.

The new proposal would not have come about without the constant effort of the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge and Golden Gate Audubon staff, and the financial support of our members and other funders. We have worked to protect the terns for more than 30 years, and even if the project is successful, we will remain engaged in monitoring, improving habitat, and advocating for the terns.

We must also acknowledge the leadership of the East Bay Regional Park District, which originally proposed the compromise, and the willingness of the Navy, VA, USFWS, and city of Alameda to work in good faith to find a compromise that worked for all parties. If successful, this will be the rare example of cooperation between multiple federal and local agencies that results in a project in which all parties can be proud.

—Mike Lynes, Conservation Director